

EDAD 639: Administrative Practicum
Chadron State College
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Examination of Personal and Professional Ethical Conduct

According to Hackmann (2002) and ISLLC Standard 5, “A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (pg. 155). School administrators and instructional leaders have an immense responsibility to the education of students, support of staff, and to the community in which the school serves. Acting, practicing, and facilitating an ethical culture of leading and learning is a nonnegotiable responsibility of anyone charged with the numerous tasks that coincide with educational leadership. In addition to ethical behavior of educational leaders within the school, “as public employees, administrators and teachers have a responsibility that exceeds what is expected of other citizens: They must enforce and model public values as they carry out their daily responsibilities” (Hackmann, Schmitt-Oliver, & Tracey, 2002, pg. 156).

It is important for one to establish and review a code of ethical conduct that can be translated from one’s role of educational leadership to the role of public citizen. In order to complete an examination of personal and professional ethical conduct, I have selected to use the *Statement of Ethics* provided by Hackmann et.al. (2002). The ten statements provided by Hackmann et.al. (2002) and will be accompanied with a reflective statement based upon experiences from my educational career.

1. Makes the well being of students the fundamental value in all decision-making and actions.

With every decision that I have made professional, instructionally and athletically, I have always kept the students/athletes in the forefront. What is best for the kids? What would be best for the students? How will the students benefit from this decision? All of the above mentioned questions have been expressed throughout my classroom instructional career. Now that I am in a different educational and instructional setting, I find myself asking the same questions. I may not have a direct impact on students, but I do work with teachers and must be mindful that their needs in the classroom are directly related to students.

2. Fulfills professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity.

There is an old saying that goes, "if it is worth doing, it is worth doing right." However, sometimes the right thing to do or the right decision to make is not always the easiest or most popular choice. There have been occasions that I have been faced with making the right choice or the popular choice. It is important for educational leaders, teachers, coaches, parents, etc. honor their beliefs relating to honesty, integrity, and ethics while making a decision. There will be times in the future when I will be faced once again with making the right choice vs. the popular choice. I must be responsible to the parties involved and responsible to my values of honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior.

3. Supports the principle of due process and protects the civil and human rights of all individuals.

I have never been in a situation that involved due process and the protection of civil and human rights of individuals from an educational leader's point of view. Due to my experiences in the classroom, coaching, and now staff development, I have not had the experience of working through any human resource management problems. However, there have been instances when a student and/or athlete was facing disciplinary issues in which due process was enacted and carried out with the utmost respect, confidentiality, communication, and second chances once the process had been completed.

4. Obeys local, state, and national laws and does not knowingly join or support organizations that advocate, directly or indirectly the overthrow of government.

As a law-abiding citizen, I have never joined or supported an organization that advocates for the overthrow of government. Do at times I believe the government acts in a manner that is contradictory to its goal, yes, but never have I supported the shutdown or overthrow of government.

5. Implements the governing board of education's policies and administrative rules and regulations.

An educational leader is an employee of the school, community, and educational board in which he or she serves. A teacher, coach, and/or administrator must enact the governing board's policies and rules. From my experiences as a teacher, coach, and an employee of an Educational Service Unit, I have always implemented board policies, rules, and regulations. Have I questioned some of those policies, rules, and regulations along the way, yes. It is important to have open lines of communication with other professional and board members so that when questions arise, one can have a professional conversation relating to the development, need for, and implementation of the questioned policy, rule, and/or regulation.

6. Pursues appropriate measures to correct those laws, policies, and regulations that are not consistent with sound educational goals.

As a community member and parent, I have attended board meetings of my local school district and have read through minutes of meetings that have occurred in the past. At this point, I have not come across any policies, rules, or regulations that I believe counteract the educational goals of the school. Communication, mentioned in the above response, is vital to the school and community working together to draft and implement effective rules, policies, and regulations that support the continuous improvement of the school and the fostering of educational goals that it has established.

7. Avoids using positions for personal gain through political, social, religious, economic, or other influences.

If one is in the field of education to get rich or powerful, that person is clearly in the wrong profession. Becoming an educator or educational leader is not about getting rich or powerful, it is about using your talents to positively influence and enrich the lives of the students through effective instruction, a development of a culture of learning, and being a model of positive behavior and high character.

8. Accepts academic degrees or professional certification only from duly accredited institutions.

Receiving a quality education is important not only for students, but for teachers as well. It is critical that as educational leaders we are putting the best teachers that we can find, recruit, and retain in the classrooms with our students on a daily basis. I do not favor any one college over another, but when I have the opportunity to hire a teacher, research will be done on the teacher preparation program in which the teacher has successfully completed along with previous successful teaching experiences. I believe it was Hackmann et. al.

(2002) that stated administrators have the capability to change the culture of the building with one hire. Educational leaders must look for the best possible teachers that have demonstrated mastery in the field of education and value the education in which they have received.

9. Maintains the standards and seeks to improve the effectiveness of the profession through research and continuing professional development.

Just as students need to learn and grow as they progress through their education, so do educational leaders and teachers. Professional development is a must for educational leaders and teachers. The key to professional development is that it must be meaningful, effective, and support the educational goals of the school. As a staff developer, providing professional development is a key aspect of my job. If there is a time when I transition from this role to the role of a principal, I will seek out the professional development necessary to ensure the quality of instruction my staff demonstrates is top notch.

10. Honors all contracts until fulfillment, release, or dissolution mutually agreed upon by all parties to contract.

The experience that I have relating to statement number ten is in my own fulfillment of contracts and obligations. Even though a contract is a binding agreement between two parties, receiving a contract to continue your craft is an honor and privilege. As an educational leader it will be important to remember my transitions throughout my educational career and honor the transitions that teachers, coaches, and other leaders will make through their educational careers.

Personal and professional ethical conduct is a quality that is immensely important in the field of education, yet rarely discussed. People aspiring to be educational leaders must make a conscious effort to examine their own beliefs relating to ethical conduct and base decisions off of the values that beliefs that exist within themselves, community, and school.

References:

Hackmann, D.G., Schmitt-Oliver, D.M., & Tracy, J.C. (2002). *The standards-based administrative internship*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.